

WINTER 2006

PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE

REPRESENTATIVE **AL O'BRIEN**

1ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



Dear neighbors,

It's our duty to keep our children and communities safe. I take that duty seriously, both as chair of Criminal Justice and Corrections and as a former police supervisor.

This newsletter is my chance to keep you informed about what's happening in the Legislature regarding public safety.

The top three issues we're wrestling with today are:

- the creation of more severe punishments for sex predators who offend against children
- the best way to fight meth addiction; and
- making sure we can protect you in case of an emergency.

Some of the best ideas for reforms have come from people like you, so I thank you for taking the time to read this and I hope to hear your ideas, comments or questions.

Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving as your representative. I hope this newsletter finds you and your family well, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely yours,



Rep. Al O'Brien

Chair, Criminal Justice and Corrections

HOW YOU CAN REACH ME:

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Olympia, WA 98504-0600

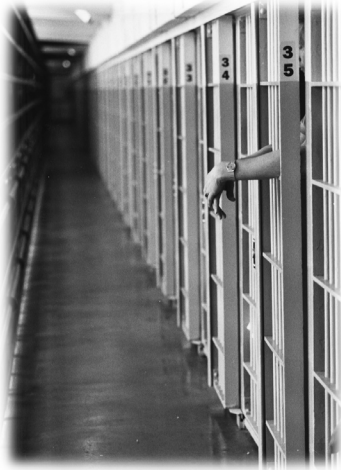
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Committees:

- Criminal Justice and Corrections (Chair)
- Capital Budget
- Financial Institutions & Insurance

Protecting your family from sex offenders



My goal: to pass legislation this session that will send sex offenders who prey on children to prison for a long, long time.

I am working with police, prosecutors, victims, and lawmakers from both parties (Democrats and Republicans) on a package of reforms for the 2006 session that are tough as nails. The new legislation is aimed at keeping our children and families safe by locking up the most dangerous sex offenders, those that we fear the most, for a longer period of time.

Longer prison sentences for dangerous offenders

- 25 years to life for a violent sex offense against a child
- 25 years to life for a stranger committing a serious sex offense against a child

Protecting children

- Persons convicted of being in possession of child pornography must register as a sex offender
- Renewing the ban on sex offenders living near schools or child care centers and prohibiting them from other places where children normally gather, like swimming pools, playgrounds and community centers.
- Level 3 sex offenders who offended against a child and register as homeless – will be monitored by GPS trackers.

Increased control over convicted sex offenders in our communities

- Toughen punishment for sex offenders who fail to register
- Require registration within 72 hours for convicted sex offenders moving here from other states

Fighting meth

All of us recognize meth is an epidemic. The question is, what's the best way to beat meth?

We have to get meth addicts clean and prevent our kids from becoming hooked.

I believe we must fight meth on three fronts:

- (1) Preventing our kids from getting hooked
- (2) Provide treatment for those addicted to meth
- (3) Shutting off the supply of meth

Last session, we passed reforms to:

- Shut down meth labs – This law restricts access to the Cold and Allergy medications used to “cook” meth. These reforms limit purchases of these products to two packages in a 24 hour period; require retailers to keep these products in locations where they are inaccessible without assistance; and require buyers to show a photo ID and sign a log that law enforcement can use to identify excessive purchases. A similar law in Oklahoma reduced meth lab incidents by 80 percent. (House Bill 2266)
- Provide treatment for those who are addicted – Most crime is caused by addiction. To really get tough on crime, we have to get tough on addiction. House Bill 2015 fixes the diversion program (Drug Offender Sentencing Alternative) to make it more effective

so we can stop the revolving door of addiction and prison.

What's next: Everyone has seen the TV and newspaper stories about meth labs, and how cooking meth creates a toxic mess. We're making progress on denying meth cooks the chemicals they need to make meth, and we're doing a better job of cleaning up toxic meth sites.

The new problem: more and more meth is either (a) coming here straight from Mexico or (b) cooked in big super-labs run by drug cartels. So instead of individual meth cooks, we're facing a more organized and motivated enemy.

We are trying to establish working relationships with Mexican and Canadian governments to stop the importation of meth and other drugs.



Protecting your family when a disaster hits

Many people have seen the devastating mix of disaster and poverty that happened in New Orleans and wondered, “Are we safe here in Washington?”

Our state doesn't suffer from hurricanes and the endemic poverty of the Deep South, but we are not immune. There are 700,000 people living in poverty right here in Washington State. We may not face hurricanes and tornadoes, but we are at risk:

- Scientists say we're overdue for the Big One, an earthquake that would collapse major bridges like the Alaska Way Viaduct and the 520 Bridge;
- A tsunami would devastate our coastline and threaten the entire Puget Sound, which could act like a funnel;
- Hot mudflows from Mt. Rainier have repeatedly covered valleys with 30 feet of mud where cities stand today – Orting, Sumner, Puyallup and Kent;
- Doctors expect another global flu pandemic like the Spanish Flu of 1918, which killed millions; and
- Almost every corner of Washington is vulnerable to wildfires or floods.



What we can do

Experts tell us we can't expect the federal government to send help for at least 36 hours.

I believe Washington state needs to take action so we can protect our families and neighbors when a natural disaster strikes.

That means making sure state agencies, counties and cities are working together. It means giving local police and firefighters the information and resources they need so we're all working together.

I'll work with other lawmakers to make sure our state has a plan that brings everybody together to protect us during a disaster.

Preparing your family for a disaster

Chances are that after a major disaster, so many people will be affected that your family won't get immediate help. So it's smart for every family to have a plan:

- a safe place to rendezvous;
- alternative ways of communicating with each other, as the telephone and cell phone systems usually gets overloaded during a disaster;
- emergency supplies and food that are enough for three days.

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE **AL O'BRIEN**
1ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



Please
place
stamp
here



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What do you think?

I’m interested in your thoughts and opinions. Please take a minute to share your views.

1. Priority: What issue should the Legislature focus on during the 2006 session?

☐ Education ☐ Transportation ☐ Environment ☐ Health care ☐ Civil rights ☐ Other

2. Philosophy: How do you think the Legislature should approach issues?

☐ Hands off – the state should keep its hands off the economy and our personal freedoms

☐ Progressive – equal opportunity in education and jobs; liberty and tolerance for all

☐ Conservative – hands off the economy, but enforce moral and ethical standards

☐ Hands on – the state should protect equal opportunity while enforcing moral and ethical standards

3. Vision: If you could do ONE thing, what would you accomplish by 2010?

☐ Health care reform☐ Safer neighborhoods



☐ No more clear-cutting☐ Lower taxes

☐ College affordable for all☐ Passenger trains statewide

☐ End discrimination☐ Universal pre-school

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